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Shallow River

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Shallow River

by Jack Rickard

slides three fingers deep
past fence post armies,
shelter belt encampments,
and the Union soldier on Walnut Hill,

bronze rifle at the ready,
marching towards Chickamauga.
Ebbs by spotted cows
standing udder deep
in cool water respite,

past the flour mill,
pigeons frozen in flight
over the broken truck
sitting idle on the drive,
still waiting for harvest.

Drifts by Harry Floyd's house,
home from the war,
where they took away his gun,
gave him a shovel
when they saw the color of his skin.

Bubbles around the court house
where in the basement, Blind Dan,
tuner of pianos, sits
with his embroidery,
stitching detail he will never see.

Slips by Sheriff Hawkins' house,
where upstairs behind closed blinds,
his daughter stands before the mirror,
feeling for new elevations.

Glides past Cat-tails blowing
puffs of seeds into the current,
to be reborn downstream
alongside cottonwood Sivas,

arms praying for rain.
Carries tired promises
on paper boats, far out to sea.

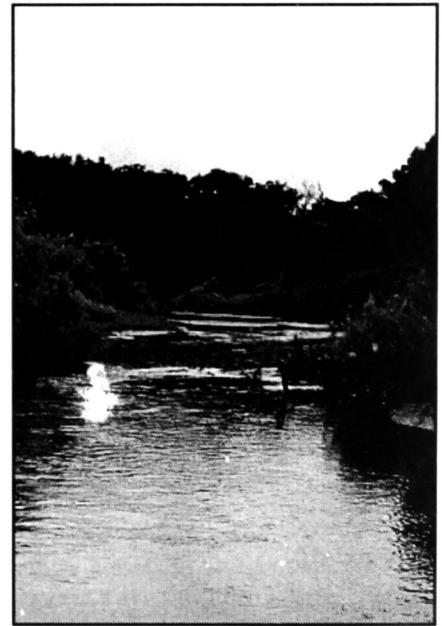


Photo by Chad Martin

